

HOUGHTON ROAD CORRIDOR TUCSON, ARIZONA

NATIVE PLANT PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Prepared for

Arizona State Land Department

Task I-C-5.6 Deliverable

UPP No. 47-111563

JULY 14, 2008

Introduction

GRS Landscape Architects, Inc., as part of a team of consultants was retained to look at potential opportunities and constraints to the development of the Houghton Road Corridor (HRC). The HRC is approximately 12,000 acres located in Southeast Tucson. This work is done as a part of the HRC Urban Planning Permit (UPP) No. 47-111563 issued to Westcor in January, 2008.

The GRS Landscape Architects, Inc. scope of work includes evaluating the density and condition of native plants throughout the site and the implications of the City of Tucson NPPO (Native Plant Preservation Ordinance). This report summarizes the current City of Tucson NPPO and presents the results of a combined aerial photo and field reconnaissance of the protected native plants within the HRC area.

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the existing City of Tucson Native Plant Preservation Ordinance (NPPO). The 12,000 acre HRC (Houghton Road Corridor) project has been divided into 3 NPPO zones based on the apparent density of protected native plants. These have been confirmed in the field with ground-truthing and sampling.

The application of the NPPO to proposed development within Zone 1 (the least-dense zone) will have little impact. The application of the NPPO to proposed development within zone 2 (moderate-density zone) will have some impacts and require transplant and mitigation of some native plants. The amount of transplant and mitigation in Zone 2 will correlate with other landscape and screening requirements in the City of Tucson. Zone 3 areas (the most-dense Zone) will require significant transplant and mitigation so the impact on development could be significant. Development within this zone should be carefully considered.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The data gathered during this evaluation will be used in future task items to assess the impacts of masterplan alternatives on native plants and plant communities. Potential preservation and mitigation efforts required for masterplan implementation can be estimated.

This data, in combination with future UPP task items may also assist in the resolution of native plant issues at the masterplan level. This is desirable because it will assure protection of valued native plant communities and resolve future Native Plant issues on a regional basis.

With the data gathered in this study, the following recommendations can be made.

1. Negotiate with the City of Tucson to resolve native plant preservation and mitigation issues at the masterplan level. Resolution of native plant issues at the masterplan level will provide clear development rights as well as clear understanding of the requirements of native plant protection.
2. Complete the balance of UPP scope items related to the native plant ordinance. There are several UPP scope items that are not included within the Phase 1A scope. These provide additional information and will facilitate negotiation with the City of Tucson on this item.
3. Combine requirements of Native Plant, WASH, ERZ and Floodplain Ordinance in a holistic manner across the entire HRC project area. This not only provides a more cohesive plan for natural open space but spreads the mitigation requirements and preservation credits equally among future developers.